

INTRODUCTION

Given resources, including desire, ingenuity, time and financing, man has frequently demonstrated his ability to modify his physical environment in order to overcome natural obstacles or to overcome problems of his own making as exemplified by such feats as draining swamps, irrigating deserts, building super highways, rebuilding thousands of acres of urban development, etc. However, the practicality of many such projects is questionable; the resources expended frequently might have been better used elsewhere under less adverse circumstances or the problem might have been minimized or avoided completely by adequate initial planning. But frequently economic and political pressures, rather than sound planning, have resulted in impractical solutions to avoidable problems.

The same reasoning applies to the development of an urban area, limitations of the natural physical setting can be ignored or modified by costly solutions; however, the most practical approach is to guide urban development in such fashion as to take advantage of the natural features and to prevent problems arising from man-made additions to the natural setting. In other words, streams do not have to be polluted, developed areas do not have to flood frequently, building foundations do not have to settle and crack, smoke does not have to blow across developed areas, septic tanks do not have to fail, and wells do not have to dry up. Careful study of the natural urban setting - its climate, geology, ground water, soils, topography, streams, etc. - before development can minimize problems later, if the facts learned from such analysis are used as guides for development rather than being ignored in the face of man-made economic and political pressures. Because of their importance to future development, the natural physical factors affecting the Sanford Planning Area are examined first in this report.